

Recommendation No. 5 - Develop a Comprehensive Reports Management Program to Control The Quantity of Paper Created and Improve the Quality of Documentation.

Reports management is a continuing program designed to improve the quality of reports, eliminate those not needed and assure that reports are prepared by the simplest and most economical means.

We installed reports management programs on a limited basis in several offices in 1955. These projects were confined to the conventional, periodic progress reports prepared within these areas. Even on this limited basis approximately 7,000 man hours were saved annually.

Since 1955, the extensive use of Computers and other automatic data processing equipment has made it easy to produce more reports and create more paper. Based on a total of 4,064,185 sets of tabulating paper used in 1963, we estimate that at least 12 million pieces of paper are being created annually by various automatic data processing methods. A significant portion of this is for production of reports.

A spot check of our Records Control Schedules indicates that only a small portion of the paper produced by automatic data processing methods is kept a long time; however, large amounts of these records are stored in valuable office equipment and scarce office space with some of it going to the Center.

An active Reports Management Program carried out by Component Records Officers with staff guidance from us will produce savings in office and Records Center space.

"I was pleased to note that you have recognized as potentially a serious problem the massive quantities of reports produced by electronic equipment. I agree with you that we need an active reports management program designed to control the production of such reports and reduce the retention time to the bare essential minimum. I wonder if we need to explore the feasibility of a more vigorous centralized program of control over these reports than is now possible under the decentralized responsibilities of component records officers. Perhaps we should establish a close liaison with the Office of Computer Services which will keep us informed of the quantity of reports they are producing which may ultimately find their way into Records Center storage space, looking toward the possibility of bringing some influence to bear with the OCS people during the formative stages of some of their computer applications. I would appreciate your exploring this and recommending any action you consider appropriate."